

**The Los Angeles River, the Great Wall of Los Angeles and the Heritage Parkscape:
Reviving the Forgotten History of Water, Land, and Wildlife**



Social and Public Art Resource Center and



Center for Law in the Public Interest

Proposal to the

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

January 2006 revised May 2006

A. Executive Summary

SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center) and the Center for Law in the Public Interest (CLPI) submit this proposal for \$375,000 for acquisition and development of an outdoor facility to promote public access to, and participation in the conservation of, land, water, and wildlife resources as part of the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. The walls of the River will provide the walls of this extended outdoor facility, which will provide wildlife viewing, outdoor experiences, and conservation and education programs to the public and to students. The facility will start at the Great Wall of Los Angeles mural in the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley, and follow the River to the Zanja Madre in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, passing El Rio de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard, Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument as part of the Heritage Parkscape. The facility will be operated by SPARC, a non-profit organization, in cooperation with the University of California, Los Angeles and other non-profit organizations. The facility will serve children from urban areas that lack access to natural areas and outdoor education programs.

The extended outdoor facility will include the following components: (1) A new solar-lit bridge spanning the Los Angeles River in the existing park in front of the Great Wall, with conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife along the River appearing on interpretive stations on the bridge. (2) Conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife along the River appearing on interpretive stations in pathways throughout the park. (3) Restored art work about water, land, and wildlife in the Great Wall mural covering the history of the River from prehistoric times to the 1950's. (4) Art work about water, land, and wildlife in the new mural extending the Great Wall to cover the next four decades (1960's, 70's, 80's, & 90's). (5)

A pilot project of conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife on 15 interpretive stations linking the Great Wall, the River, and the Zanja Madre as part of the Heritage Parkscape. The outdoor facility will consist of the bridge, the art work in the Great Wall about water, land, and wildlife, and the conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife on the interpretive stations.

The art work and conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife in the facility will tell the story of the River when it was natural, the death of the River when it was drowned in concrete to control floods, and current efforts to green the Los Angeles River. In this way, the facility will promote public access to, and participation in the conservation of, water, land, and wildlife. The common theme is to revive the history of water, land and wildlife that unites people in Los Angeles through parks, murals and public art, education, and conservation.

Three centuries ago, the River meandered through marshes, and forests of willow and sycamore. Trout spawned in its waters and grizzly bears roamed its shores in search of food. The River and its adjacent woodlands helped support one of the largest concentrations of Native Americans in North America. It also has largely determined the location of the City of Los Angeles. The River was the sole source of drinking water for more than a century, providing drinking water for a rapidly expanding population and irrigating the vineyards and orange groves that made Southern California the most important agricultural region in the West.

In 1930, the classic report Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (the son of the designer of Central Park) and Bartholomew & Associates (who designed Westwood) recommended the greening of the Los Angeles River as part of a comprehensive web of parks, playgrounds, and beaches for the Los Angeles region. Tragically, city leaders ignored those recommendations. Instead, in the 1930s the Army Corps of Engineers drowned the Los Angeles River in concrete, making it one of the most environmentally degraded rivers in the world.

Today, Los Angeles is revitalizing the River through a master plan process. Sustainable methods of flood control like parks and green fields can line the River to help control floods and purify the water. One good example of this approach is the Sepulveda Basin, which is generally a park with natural plants and wildlife, and playing fields. During floods, the basin is flooded and people do not use it for park space. When the water subsides, the park uses resume. Green fields in parks and schools also purify rainwater through the aquifer percolation process.

Were it not for the Los Angeles River, the city would not be where it is today. Los Angeles would not be at all. The River has always been at the heart of whichever human community is in the basin: Gabrielino village, Spanish outpost, Mexican pueblo, United States city, world metropolis. The River has played many roles. It has supplied the residents of the city and basin with water to drink and spread amidst their grapes, oranges, and other crops. It has been an instrument by which people could locate themselves on the landscape. It has been a critical dividing line, not only between east and west, north and south, but between races, classes, neighborhoods. The River has also been a place where ideas and beliefs about the past, present, and future of Los Angeles have been raised and contested. By telling these stories of the River, the extended outdoor facility will way promote public access to, and participation in the conservation of, land, water, and wildlife resources. The facility will serve children from urban

areas that lack access to natural areas and outdoor education programs by engaging at risk youth in the restoration and extension of the Great Wall, and the creation of the conservation education programs.

The Great Wall depicts the history of water, land, wildlife, and people along the Los Angeles River. The Great Wall is painted on a half-mile section of the concrete retaining wall of the Tujunga Wash in the River. California Chicana muralist Judy Baca created the Great Wall. Over the past thirty years, the mural has suffered extensive damage due to sun exposure and lack of restoration funds. A detailed Conservation and Aesthetic Recovery Plan, written by Ms. Baca and Nathan Zakheim Associates, a professional Mural Conservator, will guide each step of the project. A newly designed bridge (the current deteriorated wooden bridge is closed) will become a central public entrance and center for conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife along the River. The bridge will include solar lighting panels and will provide an excellent viewing platform for the River, wildlife, and mural. The new prefabricated steel bridge by Continental Bridge Co. will be adapted for the site by WHY Architects, who will also design the interpretive stations for conservation education programs along the park pathways. The restoration plan for the mural includes reconsolidation and reattachment of loose paint, removal of surface oxidization for color revival, repainting disappearing sections of the mural, and the application of ultraviolet protective coatings that will extend the life of the mural for thirty-five years or more. The funds from this project will be allocated only for the restoration of those portions of the Great Wall concerning water, land, and wildlife.

The Great Wall depicts many events that actually took place along the Los Angeles River and the Heritage Parkscape. The proposed conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife on 15 interpretive stations along the River from the Great Wall to downtown will consist of a graphic image and text created in porcelain enamel on metal, and mounted on concrete podiums. In this way the extended facility will connect water, land, wildlife, and people along the River through shared space and time and eventually unite over 100 rich environmental, recreational, historical, and cultural resources in the heart of Los Angeles. The Parkscape will link the Los Angeles River, the Great Wall, the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, El Rio de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard, the Zanja Madre or "mother trench" that provided water for early L.A., El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, Elysian Park, Confluence Park, the Arroyo Seco, Debs Park, Biddy Mason Park, the new Ascot Hills Park, and other water, land, and wildlife resources.

The requested \$375,000 in funds will be allocated as follows:

- (1) \$75,000 to restore and preserve existing portions of the Great Wall covering water, land, and wildlife along the River, and;
- (2) \$160,000 to acquire and develop a new solar-lit bridge with interpretive stations, conservation education programs and to construct five additional interpretive stations along the wall to provide access to the ecological content about the water, land, and wildlife along the River;
- (3) \$65,000 to design the next four decades (60's, 70's, 80's, & 90's) of the portion of the Great Wall covering water, land, and wildlife;

(4) \$75,000 to develop conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife on 15 interpretive stations linking the River, the Great Wall, the Zanja Madre, and surrounding lands and wildlife as part of the Heritage Parkscape.

SPARC would be the recipient administrator of the funds.

B. About The Great Wall of Los Angeles Mural

The Great Wall of Los Angeles and its adjoining viewing trails and park are a public monument to water, land, and wildlife along the Los Angeles River and the stories of California's ethnic groups underrepresented in historical markers, history and public consciousness. A half-mile long work of art created during the civil rights and environmental activism of the 1970's and 1980's, its creation marks a significant event in 20th century California history. Well-documented as a major work of public art, restoration of the Great Wall will preserve a significant California environmental, cultural and historic resource. The Great Wall is a seminal work of public art created during California's Chicano Mural Art Renaissance.

The mural begins with prehistoric California by examining water, land, and native plants and wild life and then depicting Southern California's first peoples, the Chumash and Tongvas, who predate the European settlers in the Los Angeles region. The site itself is representative of an era of California history when massive flood control projects determined Los Angeles' destiny as a City. The Great Wall is located on a half-mile section of the Los Angeles River that was covered with concrete in the 1930's through 1950's. To this day, the concrete-covered Los Angeles River remains a point of debate by urban advocates. This powerful public monument lies on this unique site, alongside what was once the flowing waters of the Los Angeles River.

The work proposed will promote public access to, and participation in the conservation of, land, water, and wildlife resources as part of the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. The restoration will enhance the visibility of the now fading images and make the history more accessible with interpretive stations along the wall so that viewers can take self-guided tours and comprehend the history represented in the images of the Wall, including the history of the water, land, and wildlife along the River. The bridge will provide an interpretive center offering views of the entire mural and both upstream and downstream views of the River. The bridge will include a view to the river bottom through viewing portals and information about the River will appear on the interpretive panels on the wall opposite the social history. The bridge will become a unique combination of environmental and social history.

We propose to conduct this project in four phases:

Phase One / June 2006 - October 2006

Great Wall mural restoration: We request \$75,000 that SPARC will leverage with other matching funds to restore and repaint portions of the Great Wall of Los Angeles depicting water, land, and wildlife along the Los Angeles River. The restoration work began the summer of 2005 when artists teams repainted two panels to their original brilliance, creating "windows" into the mural that show its original beauty. With the use of improved conservation techniques, the repainted and restored mural will last another 30 years or more.

Restoration of The Great Wall will qualitatively enhance the visitors' experience and improve educational opportunities particularly for traditionally underserved, low to moderate-income communities whose access to conventional resources on California history (universities, private libraries, high-admission museums) is limited. By returning the mural to its original vibrancy, we will insure its future life and, in the restoration process, we will engage another generation of painters, restorers and docents.

A restored Great Wall will greatly increase the usage of the mural as an educational tool and cultural resource and visitor destination. The SPARC "Community Participation Plan" calls for expanding audiences from our current base, one that has historically reflected the diversity of the greater Los Angeles region. The plan also calls for developing a relationship with the Los Angeles Unified School District to provide a system-wide approach that will bring regular tours of school children to the site. Currently individual teachers initiate tours to the mural; a more organized approach will facilitate SPARC's desire to support educational efforts. Future tours will include materials for teachers to use with the new interpretive panels to deepen the understanding of history, the environment, and the role water, land, and wildlife along the River play in our lives. SPARC's recent educational DVD with the story of the mural's production and visuals of the restored mural are planned for distribution to educational outlets, major magazines and newspapers including airline publications, and publications that focus on California history, environment, art and culture. Restoration of the mural to its original condition, with vibrant colors and sharp detail, will greatly facilitate our efforts to publicize the site. We have strong ties to the ethnically diverse population of Los Angeles and receive hundreds of inquiries about the status of the restoration project. During the restoration process, we will actively engage the residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. SPARC's long-range plan includes extending Great Wall by telling the story of the next four decades of California history (the 1960's to 1990's) with new mural segments to be produced by another generation of youth muralists. We cannot proceed to this next stage without restoring the first set of 41 panels.

The funds from this project will be allocated only for the restoration of those portions of the Great Wall concerning water, land, and wildlife.

Phase Two / November 2006 - November 2007

Great Wall Interpretive Bridge and Stations: We request \$160,000 to construct a new solar-lit bridge with interpretive stations and to construct five additional interpretive stations along the wall to provide access to the ecological content about the water, land, and wildlife along the River.

The Great Wall, painted on a half-mile section of the east side concrete wall in the Tujunga Wash Flood Control Channel, is situated in a public park. The channel in which the mural is painted creates a geographic split within the local community separating a half-mile of parkland on the eastside from another on the west. On the west side are two large schools and ample parking; on the east side, there are street access, public buses, limited parking and local housing. The new bridge will connect the two sides of the channel and allow mural access to the students of the schools, while providing an ample viewing platform for wildlife, the River, and the monumental scale of the mural. Due to the deterioration of the original wooden bridge, it was closed to the public in the 1990's and has remained a fenced public hazard at the site. Visitors must now park on the east side (Coldwater Canyon Blvd.), or on the west side of the channel (the

side that has no viewing access), then walk around the channel to begin the half-mile tour of the mural.

The mural site currently has no signage and lacks a physical center to place information for public use. The new bridge will become the public entrance to the mural and its interpretive center. The bridge will also insure accessibility from both the east and west sides of the mural to the two sides of the community currently divided by the concrete channel. Physical access to the mural will immediately improve for physically challenged visitors by connecting parking with paved pathways. The bridge will provide viewing access not only to the mural but also to the River it spans and to wildlife along the River. Conservation education programs that include the story of the River's degradation, and of the land, wildlife, and people who lived along it, will be included on the bridge.

The construction of interpretive stations along the Wall and River for conservation programs about water, land, and wildlife will give the visitor the opportunity to draw the essential connections between our history and traditions (our collective story) and to place, land, water, wildlife, and air we breathe.

Councilmember Wendy Greuel has allocated an additional \$100,000 for this phase.

Phase Three / February 2007 - October 2007

Great Wall continuation/the next segments; 60's, 70's 80's, 90's: We request \$65,000 to continue the design of portions of the Great Wall mural depicting water, land, and wildlife along the River on the east side of the Tujunga Wash with youth participants, community volunteers, artists and historians. SPARC's plan includes extending the next four decades of Los Angeles and California history with new mural segments, and depicting a closer relationship between the ecological histories of the River the social history. The extended mural will be produced by another generation of future youth muralists. Historical events that occurred during the later part of the 20th century, including the history of El Rio de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard and Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, would be added to the mural. When completed the mural will be a mile long (it is currently a half-mile). The funds from this project will be allocated only for those portions of the Great Wall extension concerning water, land, and wildlife.

The Great Wall's visuals -- and the process by which the visuals were originally created -- have become a monument to interracial cooperation, symbolizing important connections between divided neighborhoods. Through the process of community dialogues, peace treaties between participating rival youths were negotiated, histories of ethnic populations recovered, and a half mile concrete scar where the River once ran was painted with the support of scholars, oral historians, and neighbors. The Great Wall has depicted heretofore-untold historic events for every decade through the 1950s.

We are requesting support for the design phase of the remaining four decades yet to be memorialized at the Great Wall site, ultimately bringing The Great Wall up to date to the end of the 1990's. The design process will be based on the process used to create the original Great Wall sections, but with two crucial differences. One change is based on the years of experience that SPARC has gained in the interim, completing scores of murals in communities throughout

the greater Los Angeles area and elsewhere in the United States. The other is based on perhaps the most important technical advance in public visual-art making since the advent of muralism, the Internet.

The artistic goal of the project's design phase is to develop, under the artistic direction of Judy Baca, imagery for the next four panels of The Great Wall and to create those panels in cyberspace. As with the previous segments of The Great Wall, each of the 350-foot panels -- depicting the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s -- will depict events that occurred during those decades and that reflect the diversity of our city, state and country, and water, land, and wildlife along the River. The overall artistic goal of the project is to memorialize in four new sections of The Great Wall incidents, trends, struggles, and achievements that are neglected in traditional histories.

The artistic process will be participatory, based on the *"imaging of content"* methodology developed by Ms. Baca over the past three decades. The process involves scholars, designers, poets, environmentalists, civil rights advocates, historians, students, and local residents working together as a community to arrive at the incidents and ideas that they consider important to be represented in the work. With this community-based dialogue, a design team (artists, illustrators, youth, art students) develops ideas and sketches for the imagery of each section. The project's artistic director, Ms. Baca and her team, will create maquettes (models) for each section incorporating imagery based on the team's input. The design team will take the maquettes back to the community sites and engage community members in further discussion based on the designs for each section.

In a departure from the process used to create the first sections of The Great Wall (which were completed in the pre-Internet era), as each stage of the design for each new section is completed, it will be posted on SPARC's website (along with the source materials and documentation of the dialogue) with comments and suggestions invited. SPARC's Digital Mural Lab, operated under the auspices of the UCLA Cesar Chavez Center, is a leading resource for public art on the Internet. The Lab recently tested this kind of website based on the process used to complete one of Ms. Baca's newest mural's at the Denver International Airport.

Phase Four / July 2006 – May 2007

Heritage Parkscape: We request \$75,000 to link the Great Wall of Los Angeles in the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley with the Heritage Parkscape in the heart of Los Angeles. The grant will be used to develop a conceptual plan to link the Great Wall and the Heritage Parkscape through parks, murals and public art, and education focusing on the land, water, wildlife and people along the Los Angeles River. In addition, we plan to develop the first 15 actual interpretive elements with conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife along the River. Each site will have a plaque embedded in a permanent concrete podium, with an illustration on porcelain. SPARC has used similar materials in a series of historic plaques on the Venice boardwalk depicting historic murals that no longer exist.

The Heritage Parkscape will link water, land, and wildlife sites including the Los Angeles River, the Great Wall, the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, El Rio de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard, the Zanja Madre or "mother trench" that provided water for early L.A., El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the Tongva Garden in El Pueblo, Elysian Park, Chavez Ravine, Confluence Park, the Arroyo Seco, Debs Park, the Audobon Center, Bidy

Mason Park, the new Ascot Hills Park, Hollenbeck Park, and other water, land, and wildlife resources. Conservation education programs about these sites will be produced on the interpretive plaques. Interpretive panels at the Great Wall can direct visitors to the actual sites along the Heritage Parkscape. The interpretive panels can direct visitors to the Great Wall itself.

Our proposal for the linking park, public art, and conservation education about water, land, and wildlife along the River furthers the goals in the recent Report of the Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee (April 2004), the General Plan for El Pueblo State Historic Park adopted in 1982, the landmark report by the Department of Parks and Recreation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Survey for California* (1988), and the classic report by the Olmsted Brothers firm *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region* (1930).

C. Impact of the Great Wall

The Great Wall is a cultural icon in Los Angeles and a destination for local, regional, national and international visitors. A recent survey of mural visitors (September-October, 2005) indicated 15% of the mural visitors were from outside the United States. Of the 560 visitors surveyed, approximately 40% were Latino, 30% Non-Hispanic White, 10%, Asian-Pacific Islander, 7% African American, 5% were Native American and 8% multi-ethnic. Over 35% were 35 or younger. Students from Los Angeles Valley College, also adjacent to the site, frequent the park to study, sketch or photograph the mural. Local senior and community centers conduct tours to the mural. SPARC conducts tours for local residents, school groups from the greater Los Angeles area, and international visiting delegations. Site visits are also conducted by hotel-generated tours for both local residents and visitors. The subject of 3 films, multiple textbooks, tourist guides and art books, the mural also has visibility well beyond the physical site. SPARC's website is visited annually by 35,000 visitors, who have participated interactively by the submission of suggestions for the content of the next four decades of the mural. SPARC and the mural continue to serve local community needs in an important and unique way. For example, the students of Grant High School, located adjacent to the mural, are disproportionately Armenian immigrants, a population increasing significantly in the region. Set within a largely Latino student body, there are developing tensions between the two groups. To mediate this conflict SPARC, at the invitation of the school administration, designed curriculum based on The Great Wall as a tool to engage students in a dialogue about the history of California immigration.

D. Applicant Background

SPARC and the Center are uniquely suited to bring together the diverse communities of Los Angeles in this celebration of the water, land, and wildlife along the River and our common heritage.

SPARC is a cultural center that creates public art as a vehicle to promote civic dialogue, foster cross-cultural understanding, and address critical environmental and social issues. We accomplish our mission by producing, preserving and teaching methods to create community-based public art. SPARC's intent is to examine what we choose to memorialize through public art, and to devise and produce excellent artwork through innovative participatory processes that include creative visualization and collaboration with local residents. We have a thirty year track record of working in Los Angeles's poor and immigrant communities with youth, children and

their families and friends as participants in the production of public monuments – artwork that make their stories evident to local, national and international audiences. The restoration of The Great Wall will further our goals by preserving the signature work of our organization.

Upon completion of The Great Wall, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley contracted with SPARC in 1988 to create and manage a citywide mural program entitled “The Neighborhood Pride: Great Walls Program.” During the eighteen-year course of this program, SPARC produced hundreds of murals replicating the methodology of “The Great Wall.” SPARC is proud of its rich legacy of artwork that reflects the ethnic face of our city. SPARC’s public projects, which are national in scope, now number in Los Angeles alone in the hundreds and are considered among the most important landmarks of our city. These works are never simply individually authored endeavors; rather, they are collaborations between artists and local residents, resulting in permanent monuments, which rise from within the community. SPARC’s values as an organization are to utilize art to provide educational opportunities for youth, families, and the community at large.

The Center for Law in the Public Interest is implementing a collective vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, playgrounds, schools, and transit that serves the diverse needs of diverse users while promoting environmental and economic vitality and human health. The Center has helped build and lead diverse alliances to create the Los Angeles State Historic Park in the Cornfield, El Rio de Los Angeles State Park in Taylor Yard, the two square mile park in the Baldwin Hills, and the 140-acre natural space park in Ascot Hills in East Los Angeles. The Center is dedicated to public art in public parks, and saved Watts Towers, a cultural icon of Los Angeles, from destruction in the 1980s.

The Center has recently received awards from the City of Los Angeles, the Southern California Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board, and the Cultural Landscape Foundation for extensively publishing research and findings on urban parks and their benefits for the L.A. River, improving the quality of life in Southern California and beyond, improving water quality and restoring habitat through the greening of the Los Angeles River, and setting a national model for the urban park movement.

E. Overview of Goals for each Phase and Methodology/Tools for Deliverables

1. Re-Cap of The Great Wall of Los Angeles Phases 1-3 (primarily SPARC)

- a. Restore portions of the Wall depicting water, land, and wildlife. The existing mural on the west wall of the Tujunga Wash needs to be repainted as a result of 30 years of exposure to the elements. A detailed description of the restoration needs is provided in the attached Aesthetic Recovery Plan by Judith F. Baca and the Conservator’s Report by Nathan Zakheim Conservator & Associates (August 7, 2000).
- b. Extend the Wall with portions depicting water, land, and wildlife. We plan to extend the Great Wall to the east wall of the Tujunga Wash to cover the past 40 years of Los Angeles history since the Great Wall was completed.
- c. Interpretive Bridge and Stations with conservation education programs about water, land, and wildlife. The new bridge will connect the two sides of the channel and give mural access to the students of the school, while providing an ample viewing

platform for the monumental scale of the mural. The construction of interpretive stations along the wall will promote conservation and education about water, land, and wildlife.

- d. The Virtual Fly-Through. SPARC has produced a virtual fly-through that shows the Great Wall in its original vibrant state using computer graphics and animation in a digital video to be published on DVD. SPARC will add the extended mural to the digital animation. The fly-through will help build support to restore and extend the Great Wall and animate the new interpretive bridge and stations. The fly-through will also serve as a prototype for the pilot project and for the Heritage Parkscape overall, discussed below.
- e. Engage At-risk Youth: At-risk youth will be an important part of the team to restore and extend the Great Wall, as they were in researching, designing, and painting the Great Wall in the 1970s and 1980s. Young people learn the important role that diverse populations have played in defining and creating the history of water, land, and wildlife in California, a history that requires young ambassadors to help keep it alive and in the public consciousness.
- f. Conservation Education Programs. In addition to engaging at-risk youth, we will also create classroom materials for K-12 students to use the Great Wall and Heritage Parkscape to study the history of the River, land, wildlife, and people of Los Angeles.
- g. Landmark Designation. We will seek to have the city of Los Angeles and the State of California designate the Great Wall as a historic landmark (working with the Center).

2. Re-Cap of Linking the Great Wall, the Heritage Parkscape, and the Los Angeles River – Phase 4 (SPARC and Center)

The Los Angeles River serves as a metaphor for the collective memory that unites land, water, and people in the Los Angeles region. Through the grant, we seek to unite the Great Wall, the Heritage Parkscape, and the River through parks, murals and public art, and education.

- a. The Heritage Parkscape. The Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee has recommended that the Cornfield be linked to Taylor Yard, the Los Angeles River, and over 100 environmental, cultural, historical, and recreation resources. The Heritage Parkscape will implement these recommendations through a variety of means, including a detailed poster map with images and notes explaining each site, a unifying logo that will appear on signs at each site, interpretive panels along the Parkscape, the creation of park space and tree-lined walks, and public art including murals.
- b. Pilot Project. We will select a pilot project to illustrate the rich possibilities for linking the Great Wall with the Parkscape and the River. Included in this first phase is a suggested pilot project of 15 interpretive plaques in places of historic environmental interest, which would be linked to the Great Wall mural.

- c. A Virtual Fly-Through. SPARC has produced a virtual fly-through or computer animation of the Great Wall to be published on DVD. This digital video shows community members, civic leaders, and potential funders the rich possibilities for the work. The virtual fly-through of the Great Wall serves as a model for developing a detailed proposal for a virtual fly-through for the pilot project.
- d. Engage At-risk Youth. The pilot project will be researched and designed by at-risk youth and other experts, modeled on the process used to create the Great Wall. SPARC engaged at-risk youth to research, design, and paint the Great Wall in the 1970's and 1980's. Young people will learn the important role that the River has held for diverse populations in defining and creating the history of California, a history that requires young ambassadors to help keep it alive and in the public consciousness.
- e. Educational Materials. We will provide a detailed plan to produce classroom materials for K-12 students and others to study the history of the River, land, and people of Los Angeles through the Great Wall and Heritage Parkscape. Students, teachers, and people generally will benefit from this environmental, historical, and cultural project.
- f. Engage the Community. The process of linking the Great Wall, the Heritage Parkscape, and the River will require community dialogue and collaboration to research, design, and create the public art images. Our plan will address how to build and lead this community participation.

F. The Value of Public Art and Parks along the Los Angeles River

1. Lessons from the Urban Park Movement

In recent years, a broad consensus is emerging in support of a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, playgrounds, schools, beaches, and transportation that serves the diverse needs of diverse users and reflects the cultural urban landscape. Nowhere has this consensus been more evident than in the broad-based public support that has accompanied the acquisition of the Cornfield and Taylor Yard as state parks and major building blocks for the Los Angeles River Greenway. The urban park movement is building community and diversifying democracy from the ground up by bringing people together to decide the future of their city, their lives, and their children's lives. Together, people are creating the kind of communities where they want to live and raise children.

Drawing from the lessons of the urban park movement, SPARC and the Center will restore and extend the Great Wall, and create murals and other public art in the Heritage Parkscape, as part of the greening of the Los Angeles River to bring the City together and heal wounds of the past.

Major parts of Los Angeles are park poor, with fewer acres of parks per thousand residents than any major city in the country. All communities suffer from the lack of parks and recreation, but low-income people of color suffer first and worst.

Parks like the park along the Great Wall are not a luxury. Parks are a democratic commons that bring people together as equals and provide different rhythms for everyday life. People in parks play, walk, talk, paint, kiss, sit, jog, bike, learn, bird, protest, pray, or work. Parks cool the city and clean the air and ground. Parks provide places for recreation to improve human health; improve academic performance and access to higher education; provide lessons in teamwork, leadership, and self-esteem; and provide alternatives to gangs, crimes, drugs, violence, and teen sex. Parks promote economic vitality and create quality jobs.

Public art can play a vital role in the creation of a shared public memory: What a people choose to memorialize in public is indicative of the story it wishes to tell the next generation. Too often, the public voices of the disenfranchised are silenced, their memories discounted, their history excluded from the conversation that becomes a nation's tale.

Perhaps nowhere in our country is there more evidence of this selective public memory than in Los Angeles. Here in Los Angeles -- where 129 languages are spoken in our schools -- our society's demographic, political, economic and ethical transformation is all too apparent, as is the alarmingly narrow focus of the efforts to create public memorials. In the face of unprecedented diversity, the struggles, triumphs, and contributions of more and more communities go largely unrecognized. As a result, the communities drift apart, each unaware of the role the others have played in creating the larger community. The dialogue, the exchange of ideas that is essential to understanding, diminishes. Antagonism grows; not just the daily resentment over perceived injustices, but a deeper anger over a long-term pattern of neglect, one that periodically explodes in rage and shoves us that much farther from the discourse of true democracy.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is the most significant monument to the history of ethnic communities that have built Los Angeles. We will extend the lessons of the Great Wall to the Heritage Parkscape and along the Los Angeles River.

G. Principal Staff

1. SPARC

Judy Baca, Founder/Artistic Director. As a visual artist, Judith Baca is best known for her large-scale public murals. Her art involves extensive community organizing and participation, addressing multi-cultural audiences.

Ms. Baca's most recent works include commissions for the San Jose Cesar Chavez Monument, Los Angeles Cesar Chavez Boulevard Revitalization Project, the Central American Resource and Education Center (CARECEN), the Durango Latino Education Coalition, the Venice Boardwalk, the Denver International Airport, the University of Southern California, the Baldwin Park Metrolink station, an international exhibition entitled "Art of the Other Mexico", and an interior mural for the Southern California Gas Company's new downtown Los Angeles headquarters.

Ms. Baca continues to work on the World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear, composed of seven 10 by 30 foot portable panels on canvas. This 210-foot mural addresses contemporary issues of global importance; war, peace, cooperation, interdependence, and spiritual growth. As

the World Wall tours the world, additional panels by artists from different countries will be added to complete this visual tribute to the "Global Village." Completed panels include artists' work from Finland, Russia, a joint effort from Palestine and Israel, and most recently, the Mexico panel.

Ms. Baca founded the first City of Los Angeles mural program in 1974, which produced over 250 murals and hired over 2,000 participants in its ten years of operation. In 1976 she founded SPARC. In 1988, at the request of Mayor Tom Bradley, she developed a new City of Los Angeles mural program, based on the successful model of the Great Wall. This mural program -- entitled Great Walls Unlimited: Neighborhood Pride Program -- operates under contract with the Cultural Affairs Department and has produced over 105 murals in almost every ethnic community in Los Angeles, making it one of the country's most respected mural programs.

Ms. Baca's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, published in numerous periodicals, journals, and books, and documented in several films. She has received awards and recognition for her work from community groups such as the California Community Foundation, the Liberty Hill Foundation, the AFL/CIO, the California State Assembly, the United States Senate and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Baca was the recipient of a 2001 Education Award from the National Hispanic Heritage Awards and a 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship. She is a founding faculty member of the new California State University- Monterey Bay, where she helped to develop a Visual and Public Art Institute. After 13 years at UC Irvine in Studio Arts, she now serves as a Senior Professor in the UCLA Cesar Chavez Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and the UCLA World Arts and Cultures Department. To advance the field of muralism, in 1996 Baca created the UCLA/SPARC Cesar Chavez Digital/Mural Lab, a research, teaching and production facility based at SPARC.

Debra J.T. Padilla, Executive Director. Ms. Padilla has served as the Executive Director of SPARC since 1993. She was previously the Managing Director of Borderlands Theater in Tucson, Arizona, for eight years. She has served on numerous panels and committees for various foundations and organizations, including but not limited to: the Rockefeller Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust for the Visual Arts, the Ford Foundation-Working Capital Fund Panel, the Latino Theatre Council for the Latino Theatre Initiative at the Mark Taper Forum, the John Anson Ford Latino Audience Initiative Advisory Council, the Los Angeles Cultural Tourism Department, the LA Ad Hoc Committee of Arts Leaders, the Tucson/Pima Arts Council Grants/Heritage Panel, Arizona Commission on the Arts Grants Panel, the Tucson Museum of Art Advisory Board, and has served on the Board of Directors of Cornerstone Theater since 1995. In 2003 Ms. Padilla was nominated to serve on the Community Advisory Committee for the Center Theatre Group. Ms. Padilla completed a leadership fellowship program at the California Community Foundation called Ambassadors Within and is a recent recipient of the Durfee Foundation's Sabbatical Award. In 2005, she was nominated for and belongs to the inaugural group of the Los Angeles Women's Leadership Circle, made up of 12 women who are working in the field of social change and social justice.

2. The Center

Robert Garcia, Executive Director, has extensive experience in public policy and legal advocacy, mediation, and litigation involving complex social justice, human health, environmental, and criminal justice matters. He has influenced the investment of over \$20

billion in underserved communities, working at the intersection of social justice, sustainable regional planning, and equitable development. He graduated from Stanford University and Stanford Law School, where he served on the Board of Editors of the Stanford Law Review. He previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York under John Martin and Rudolph W. Giuliani, prosecuting organized crime, public corruption and international narcotics trafficking cases.

He is a nationally recognized leader in the urban park movement, bringing the simple joys of playing in the park to children in park starved communities. He served as Chairman of the Citizens' School Bond Oversight Committee overseeing the investment of \$14 billion to build green public schools as centers of their communities in Los Angeles from 2000 to 2005, with local jobs and an even playing field for small business enterprises. He has lectured on the vision for parks, schools, health, and transit across the country and abroad. Cardinal Roger Mahony appointed him to the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

His publications include: *The Urban Park Movement: Equal Justice, Democracy and Livability in Los Angeles*, chapter in the book *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*, edited by Dr. Robert Bullard and published by the Sierra Club (2005); *Free the Beach! Public Access, Equal Justice, and the California Coast*, 2 Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (2006) *Cross Road Blues: Transportation Justice and the MTA Consent Decree*, chapter in the book *Running on Empty* edited by Prof. Karen Lucas from the University of London (2004); *We Shall Be Moved: Community Activism As a Tool for Reversing the Rollback*, chapter in the book *Awakening from the Dream: Pursuing Civil Rights in a Conservative Era* edited by Denise C. Morgan et al. (2005); *Free the Beach!: Public Access, Equal Justice, and the California Coast*, Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (forthcoming 2006); *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities, and Legal Services*, published in a special issue on Environmental Justice for Children in the Journal of Poverty Law and Policy by the National Center on Poverty Law and the Clearinghouse Review (May-June 2005).

Erica Flores Baltodano, Assistant Director, received her J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law, where she earned the Francine Diaz Memorial Award for her steadfast commitment to public interest work. She graduated magna cum laude from UCLA with a B.A. in Sociology and a minor in Public Policy. Ms. Flores Baltodano has led grass roots efforts to save the community and the park in the Baldwin Hills by stopping a power plant and garbage dump there. She has received extensive training as a mediator of cross-cultural community disputes and has served as a member of the San Fernando Valley Girl Scout Council Board of Directors. She frequently presents at state and national conferences on topics including environmental justice, Latinos and the environment, and civil rights.